

# NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette*



classification and density of marine debris and discarded commercial fishing gear from fragile coral reefs.

Using the Internet and satellite communications, *Oscar Elton Sette* maintains a Web site titled Student Connection (<http://atsea.nmfs.hawaii.edu>), which provides semi-weekly communication between students and the ship. Students can follow the vessel's daily operations through regularly posted pictures and write-ups through this site.

The ship is named after Oscar Elton Sette, the first director of the Honolulu Laboratory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (now NOAA Fisheries' Honolulu Lab), who served from 1949 to 1955. The ship was built for the U.S. Navy in 1988 and was later transferred to NOAA. It was converted to a fisheries survey vessel, replacing NOAA Ship *Townsend Cromwell* in 2003.

NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette* supports the scientific missions of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service Honolulu Laboratory. The ship normally operates throughout the central and western Pacific, and conducts fisheries assessment surveys, physical and chemical oceanography, marine mammal projects and coral reef research. It collects fish and crustacean specimens using bottom trawls, longlines, and fish traps. Plankton, fish larvae and eggs are also collected with plankton nets and surface and mid-water larval nets.



Scientists ready a plankton net for deployment

*Oscar Elton Sette* is equipped with three small outboard driven boats; wet and dry, hydrochemistry and computer labs; an acoustic Doppler current profiler; and two deep-ocean winches, two J-frames, one A-frame, a net reel, and deep-sea trawl winches.

The ship routinely conducts scuba diving missions for the Honolulu Laboratory. Ample deck space enables *Oscar Elton Sette* to carry a recompression chamber as an added safety margin for dive-intensive missions in remote regions. The ship is actively involved in NMFS Honolulu Coral Reef Restoration cruises, which concentrate scientific efforts on the removal,



*Sette* delivers fisheries scientists to a remote research station in the Hawaiian Island archipelago



*Sette* conducts lobster trapping for fatty acid analysis of the monk seal's diet

## Ship Specifications

Length (LOA): 224 ft.  
Breadth: 43 ft.  
Draft: 15 ft.  
Displacement: 2301 tons  
Cruising Speed: 10.5 knots  
Range: 5,500 nm  
Endurance: 30 days  
Hull Number: R 335  
Call Letters: WTEE  
Commissioned Officers: 5  
Licensed Engineers: 3  
Crew: 13  
Scientists: 12 (Max)  
Delivered: 1988 to Military Sealift Command  
Commissioned: January 23, 2003  
Builder: Halter Marine, Inc. Moss Point, Mississippi



Coral reef restoration cruises include dive operations to remove discarded fishing nets and gear that entangle marine mammals

## Office of Marine and Aviation Operations

Since NOAA's beginning, NOAA ships and aircraft have played a critical role in the collection of its oceanographic, atmospheric, hydrographic, fisheries and coastal data. This fleet of platforms is managed and operated by NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), an office composed of civilians and officers of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps, one of the Nation's seven uniformed services.

NOAA's fleet of research and survey ships is the largest fleet of federal research ships in the Nation. The fleet ranges from large oceanographic research vessels capable of exploring the world's deepest ocean, to smaller ships responsible for charting the shallow bays and inlets of the United States. The fleet supports a wide range of marine activities, including fisheries research, nautical charting and mapping, and ocean and climate studies. Many of NOAA's research vessels are unique in their ability to conduct scientific research.

NOAA's fleet of aircraft operates throughout the world providing a wide range of capabilities including hurricane prediction research, marine mammal and fisheries assessment, and coastal mapping. NOAA aircraft are modified to carry scientists and specialized instrument packages to conduct research for NOAA's missions.

In addition to research and monitoring activities critical to NOAA's mission, NOAA ships and aircraft provide immediate response capabilities for unpredictable events. NOAA survey ships found the wreckage of EgyptAir Flight 990, TWA Flight 800 and John F. Kennedy Jr.'s aircraft. Our ships, aircraft and personnel have also conducted damage assessments after major oil spills, such as the Exxon Valdez and Persian Gulf War, and after land-falling hurricanes. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, NOAA ships conducted emergency surveys for navigation hazards that helped Gulf ports reopen quickly, and tested the waters for contamination to ensure seafood safety. Aerial images of disaster-torn areas taken by a NOAA aircraft were posted on the Web with a Google interface, enabling residents and emergency workers to see if houses, bridges and roads were still standing.

## NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps

The NOAA Corps is one of the seven uniformed services of the United States. It is composed of commissioned officers who provide NOAA with an important blend of operational, management, and technical skills that support the agency's science and surveying programs at sea, in the air, and ashore. NOAA Corps officers, in addition to managing and operating ships and aircraft, are also scientists and engineers. Corps officers serve in NOAA's research laboratories and program offices throughout the Nation and in remote locations around the world. For example, an officer serves as station chief at the South Pole, Antarctica.

## About NOAA

NOAA conducts research and gathers data about the global oceans, atmosphere, space, and sun, and applies this knowledge to science and service that touch the lives of all Americans.

NOAA warns of dangerous weather, charts our seas and skies, guides our use and protection of ocean and coastal resources, and conducts research to improve our understanding and stewardship of the environment that sustains us all.

A Commerce Department agency, NOAA provides these services through five major divisions: the National Weather Service, the National Ocean Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service, and Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; and numerous special program offices. More information about NOAA can be found at <http://www.noaa.gov>.

Visit the ship's Web site at [www.moc.noaa.gov/os/](http://www.moc.noaa.gov/os/)  
For more information, contact OMAO at 301-713-1045  
or visit our Web site at [www.oma.noaa.gov](http://www.oma.noaa.gov)